

## Exhibit 8

OPINION · Published January 18, 2023 4:00am EST

# Elon Musk chose us to report on the Twitter Files. Here are the disturbing things I learned about the FBI

It's time to investigate the FBI's role in the Hunter Biden laptop disinformation campaign



OPINION By **Michael Shellenberger** | Fox News



## Michael Shellenberger calls for full investigation of 'politicized' FBI 'elements'

'Twitter Files' publisher and former California gubernatorial candidate sounds off on 'Tucker Carlson Tonight' after latest installment from Elon Musk is released.

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Over the last month, a team of journalists that includes me has enjoyed extraordinary access to the internal emails and other documents of the [social media platform Twitter](#).

As part of that investigation, I discovered that the FBI and intelligence community discredited factual information about Hunter Biden's foreign business dealings both after and before The New York Post revealed them to the world in October 2020.

The story begins in December 2019 when a Delaware computer store owner named John Paul (J.P.) Mac Isaac contacts the FBI about a laptop that Hunter Biden had left with him.

On Dec 9, 2019, the FBI issues a subpoena for and takes [Hunter Biden's laptop](#).

### **HUNTER BIDEN LAPTOP REPAIRMAN DETAILS 'CHILLING' WARNING FROM FBI AGENT**

It likely would have taken a few hours for the FBI to confirm that the laptop had belonged to Hunter Biden. Indeed, it only took a few days for the journalist Peter Schweizer to prove it. (See video from the tweet below.) And yet the FBI did nothing to investigate the many signs of criminal activity revealed by emails and other documents on the laptop.

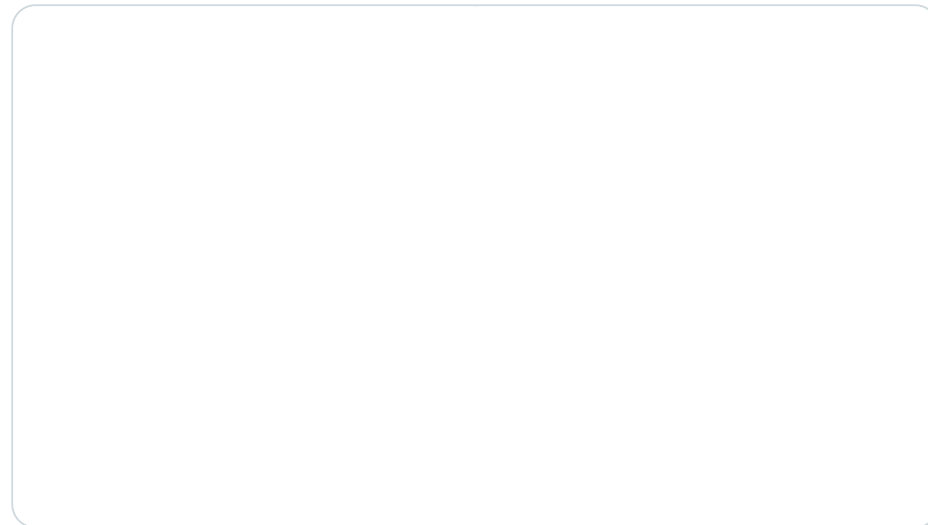
Michael Shellenberger  · Dec 19, 2022



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36. And yet it's inconceivable Baker believed the Hunter Biden emails were either fake or hacked. The [@nypost](#) had included a picture of the receipt signed by Hunter Biden, and an FBI subpoena showed that the agency had taken possession of the laptop in December 2019.

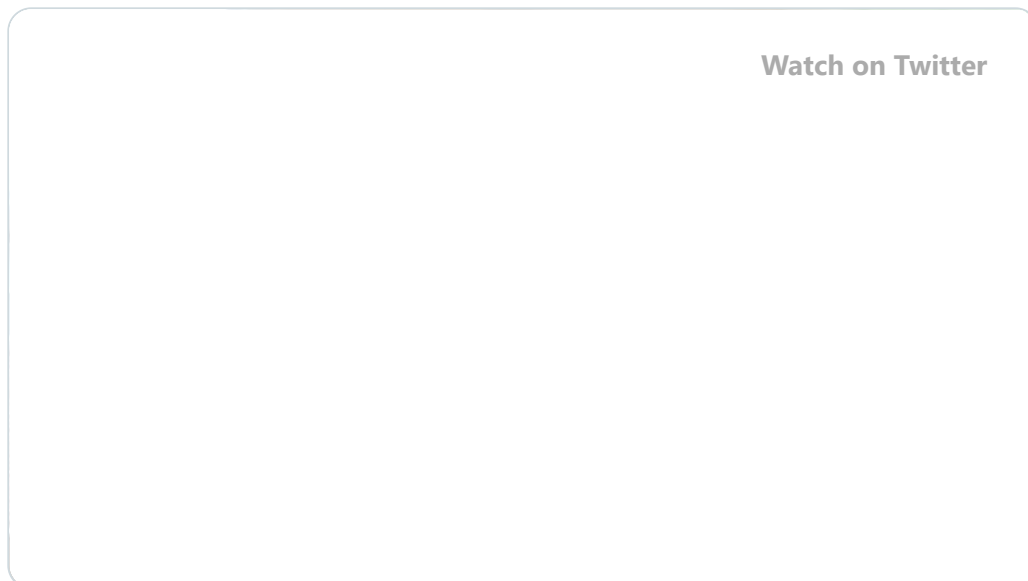


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37. As for the FBI, it likely would have taken a few \*hours\* for it to confirm that the laptop had belonged to Hunter Biden. Indeed, it only took a few days for journalist [@peterschweizer](#) to prove it.

Watch on Twitter



12:14 PM · Dec 19, 2022



17.9K



Reply



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After waiting  
Trump advised

[Read 230 replies](#)

mailed  
top.

Giuliani was under FBI surveillance at the time and thus FBI almost certainly knew what had happened. In early October, Giuliani shared the laptop's hard drive and its contents with The New York Post.

Then, a series of strange events occurred. Shortly before 7 p.m. ET on Oct. 13, Hunter Biden's lawyer, George Mesires, emailed Mac Isaac. Hunter and Mesires had just learned from The New York Post that its story about the laptop would be published the next day.

### **FROM 'SMEAR CAMPAIGN' TO 'RUSSIAN DISINFORMATION,' LIBERAL MEDIA TEAMED UP TO DISMISS HUNTER BIDEN STORY**

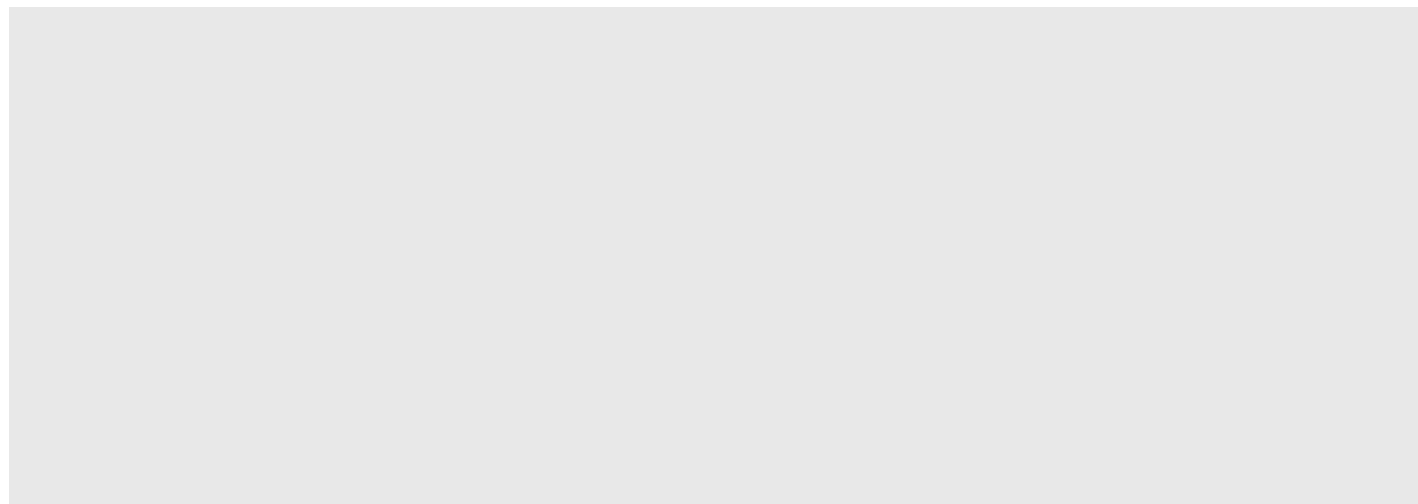
Two hours later, an FBI special agent in San Francisco named Elvis Chan sends 10 documents to Twitter's then-head of site integrity, Yoel Roth, through Teleporter, a one-way communications channel from the FBI to Twitter.

The next day, Oct. 14, 2020, The New York Post runs its explosive story revealing the business dealings of [President Joe Biden's son, Hunter](#). The article was accurate and has stood the test of

time. And yet, within hours, Twitter and other social media companies censored the NY Post article, preventing it from spreading and – more importantly – undermining its credibility in the minds of many Americans.

Why is that? What, exactly, happened?

It's important to understand that Hunter Biden earned tens of millions of dollars in contracts with foreign businesses, including ones linked to China's government, for which Hunter offered no real work.



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10. On Dec 2, @mtaibbi described the debate inside Twitter over its decision to censor a wholly accurate article.

Since then, we have discovered new info that points to an organized effort by the intel community to influence Twitter & other platforms

**Matt Taibbi** · @mtaibbi

1. Thread: THE TWITTER FILES

**Michael Shellenberger**

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11. First, it's important to understand that Hunter Biden earned \*tens of millions\* of dollars in contracts with foreign businesses, including ones linked to China's government, for which Hunter offered no real work. Here's an overview by investigative journalist @peterschweizer

Watch on Twitter

10:36 AM · Dec 19, 2022



39.7K



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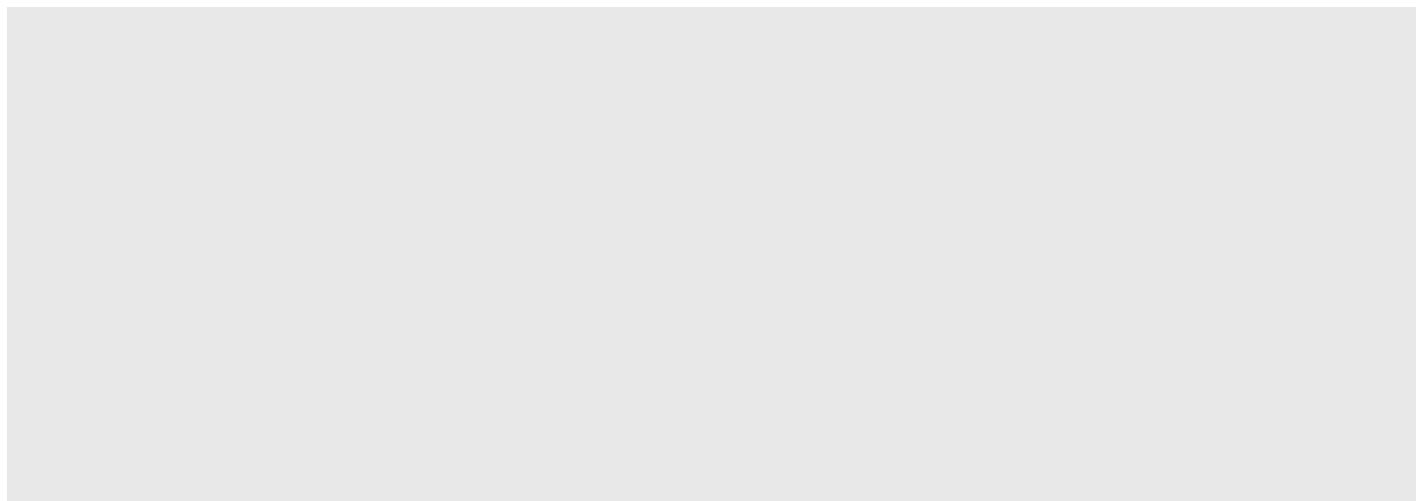
[Read 818 replies](#)

And yet, during all of 2020, the FBI and other law enforcement agencies repeatedly primed Twitter's head of site integrity (and later head of safety and trust) Yoel Roth to dismiss reports of Hunter

Biden's laptop as a Russian "hack and leak" operation.

## **2022: THE YEAR THE HUNTER BIDEN LAPTOP WAS FINALLY VERIFIED BY THE MEDIA**

Roth said in a sworn declaration given in December 2020, "During these weekly meetings, the federal law enforcement agencies communicated that they expected 'hack-and-leak operations' by state actors might occur in the period shortly before the 2020 presidential election, likely in October.... I also learned in these meetings that there were rumors that a hack-and-leak operation would involve Hunter Biden."



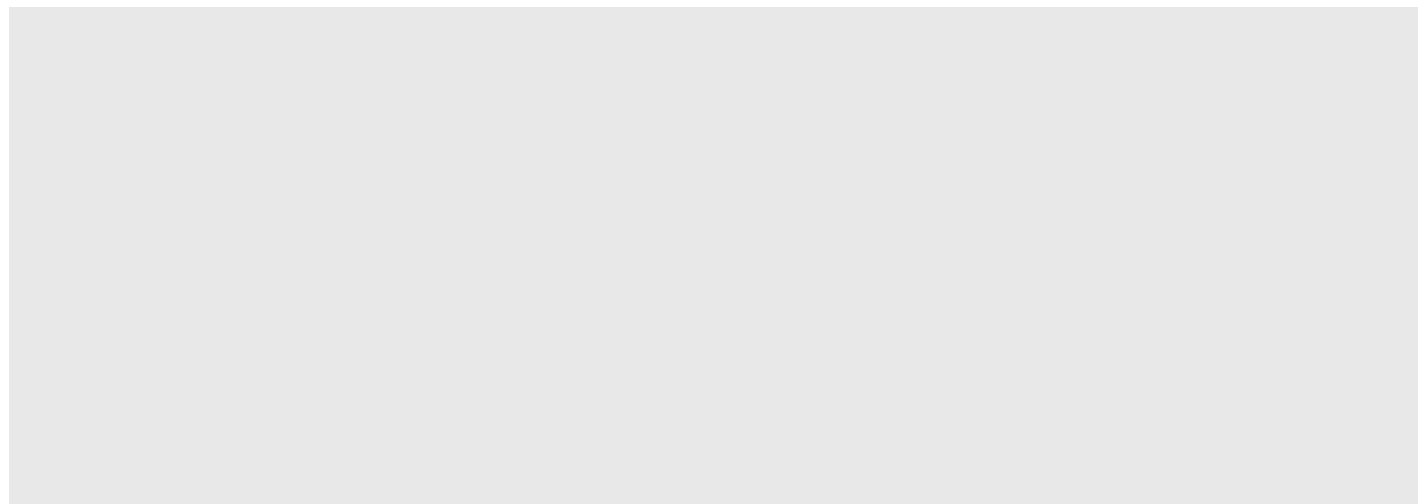
FBI did the same to Facebook, according to [CEO Mark Zuckerberg](#). "The FBI basically came to us," said Zuckerberg, [and] "was like, 'Hey... you should be on high alert. We thought that there was a lot



of Russian propaganda in 2016 election. There's about to be some kind of dump similar to that."

Were the FBI warnings of a Russian hack-and-leak operation relating to Hunter Biden based on any new intelligence? No, they weren't. "Through our investigations, we did not see any similar competing intrusions to what had happened in 2016," admitted [FBI agent Elvis Chan](#) in November 2022.

### **FBI RESPONDS TO TWITTER FILES DISCLOSURES, SAYS IT DIDN'T REQUEST 'ANY ACTION' ON SPECIFIC TWEETS**



Indeed, Twitter executives repeatedly reported very little Russian activity. For example, on Sept. 24, 2020, Twitter told the FBI it had removed 345 "largely inactive" accounts "linked to previous coordinated Russian hacking attempts." They "had little reach and low follower accounts."

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**Michael Shellenberger** ·



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E.g., on Sept 24, 2020, Twitter told FBI it had removed 345 "largely inactive" accounts "linked to previous coordinated Russian hacking attempts." They "had little reach & low follower accounts."

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foreign news' Ben

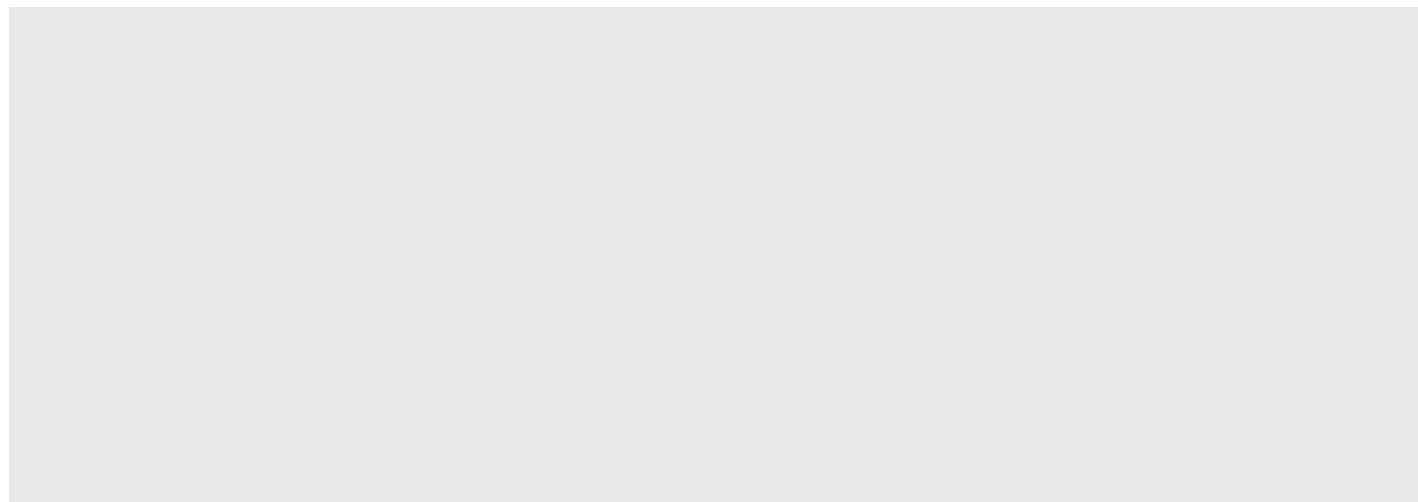
ump tweet, t that was



It's not the first time that Twitter's Roth had pushed back against the FBI. In January 2020, Roth resisted FBI efforts to get Twitter to share data outside the normal search warrant process.

### **TWITTER FILES PART 6 REVEALS FBI'S TIES TO TECH GIANT: 'AS IF IT WERE A SUBSIDIARY'**

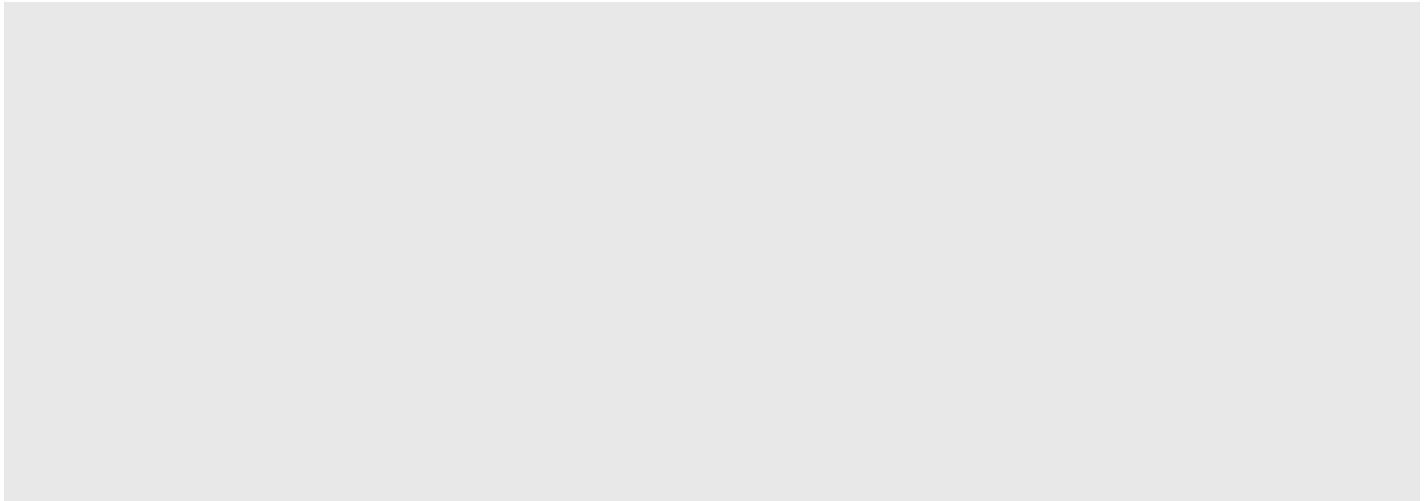
Pressure from the FBI on Twitter had been growing. "We have seen a sustained (If uncoordinated) effort by the IC [intelligence community] to push us to share more information and change our API policies," complained a senior Twitter executive. "They are probing and pushing everywhere they can (including by whispering to congressional staff)."



Time and again, the FBI asks [Twitter executives](#) for evidence of foreign influence and Twitter responds that they aren't finding anything worth reporting. "[W]e haven't yet identified activity that we'd typically refer to you (or even flag as interesting in the foreign influence context)."

Despite Twitter's pushback, the FBI repeatedly requested information from Twitter that Twitter has already made clear it would not share outside of normal legal channels.

Then, in July 2020, the FBI's Elvis Chan arranged for temporary top secret security clearances for Twitter executives so that the FBI can share information about threats to the upcoming elections. And on Aug. 11, 2020, the FBI's Chan shares information with Twitter's Roth relating to the Russian hacking organization, "APT28," through the FBI's secure, one-way communications channel, Teleporter.



Recently, Twitter's Roth told tech journalist Kara Swisher that he had been primed to think about the Russian hacking group APT28 before news of the Hunter Biden laptop came out. When it did, Roth said, "It set off every single one of my finely tuned APT28 hack-and-leap campaign alarm bells."

**TWITTER FILES 'SUPPLEMENTAL' SHOWS EVEN TRUST AND SAFETY CHIEF NOT 'COMFORTABLE' WITH FBI 'DEMANDING' ANSWERS**

In August 2020, FBI's Chan asks Twitter: does anyone there have top secret clearance? When someone mentions Jim Baker, Chan responds, "I don't know how I forgot him" — an odd claim, given Chan's job is to monitor Twitter, not to mention that they worked together at the FBI.

Who is Jim Baker? He's the former general counsel of the FBI (2014-18) and one of the most powerful men in the U.S. intelligence community. Baker has moved in and out of government for 30 years, serving stints at CNN, Bridgewater (a \$140 billion asset management firm), and the Brookings Institution. As general counsel of the FBI, Baker played a central role in making the case internally for an [investigation of Donald Trump](#).

Baker wasn't the only senior FBI executive involved in the Trump investigation to go to Twitter. Dawn Burton, the former deputy chief of staff to [FBI head James Comey](#), who initiated the investigation of Trump, joined Twitter in 2019 as director of strategy.

#### **JAMES BAKER, TWITTER LAWYER FIRED BY ELON MUSK, PLAYED KEY ROLE IN FBI'S TRUMP-RUSSIA COLLUSION PROBE**

As of 2020, there were so many former FBI employees — "Bu alumni" — working at Twitter that they had created their own private Slack channel and a crib sheet to onboard new FBI arrivals.



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♥ 27.1K

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Efforts continued to influence Twitter's Yoel Roth. In September 2020, Roth participated in an Aspen Institute "tabletop exercise" on a potential "Hack-and-Dump" operation relating to Hunter Biden. The goal was to shape how the media covered it — and how social media carried it.

The organizer was Vivian Schiller, the former CEO of NPR, the former head of news at Twitter, the former general manager of [The New York Times](#), and the former chief digital officer of NBC News.



Attendees included Facebook's head of security policy and the top national security reporters for The New York Times, CNN and The Washington Post.

By mid-September 2020, the FBI's Chan and Roth had set up a special encrypted messaging network so employees from FBI and Twitter could communicate. They also agreed to create a "virtual war room" for "all the [Internet] industry plus FBI and ODNI" [Office of the Director of National Intelligence].

#### **JORDAN SEEKS TESTIMONY FROM GARLAND, WRAY, OTHERS IN HOUSE JUDICIARY PROBES OF DOJ, FBI**

Then, on Sept. 15, 2020, the [FBI's Laura Dehmloew](#), who heads up the Foreign Influence Task Force, and Chan, requested to give a classified briefing for Jim Baker without any other Twitter staff, such as Yoel Roth, present.

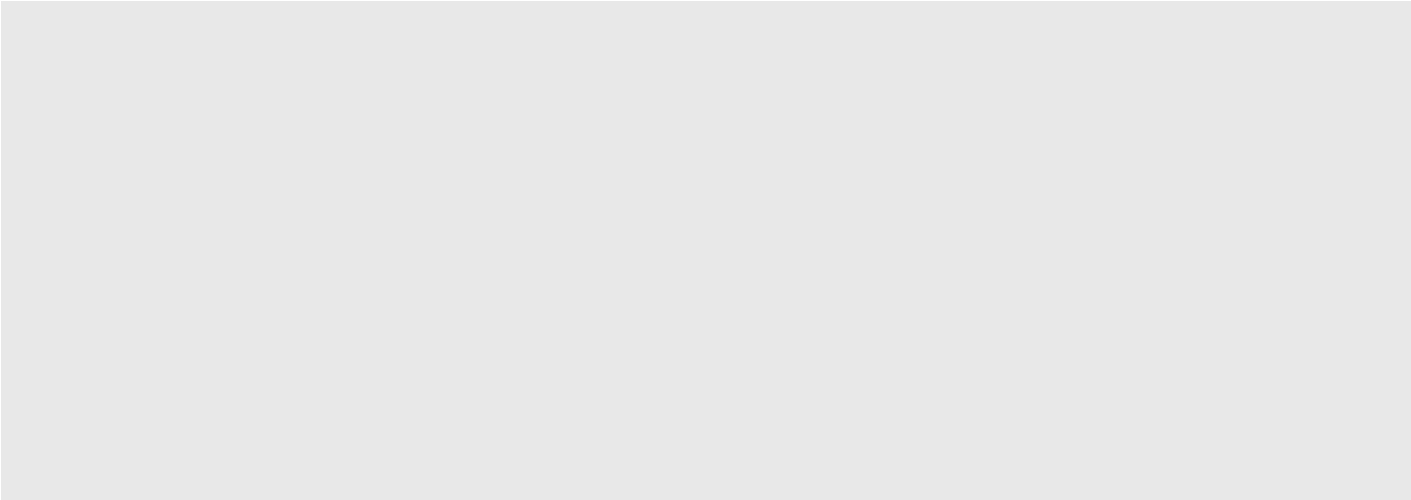




On Oct. 14, shortly after The New York Post publishes its Hunter Biden laptop story, Roth says, "it isn't clearly violative of our Hacked Materials Policy, nor is it clearly in violation of anything else," but adds, "this feels a lot like a somewhat subtle leak operation."

In response to Roth, Baker repeatedly insists that the Hunter Biden materials were either faked, hacked or both, and a violation of Twitter policy. Baker does so over email, and in a Google doc, on Oct. 14 and 15.

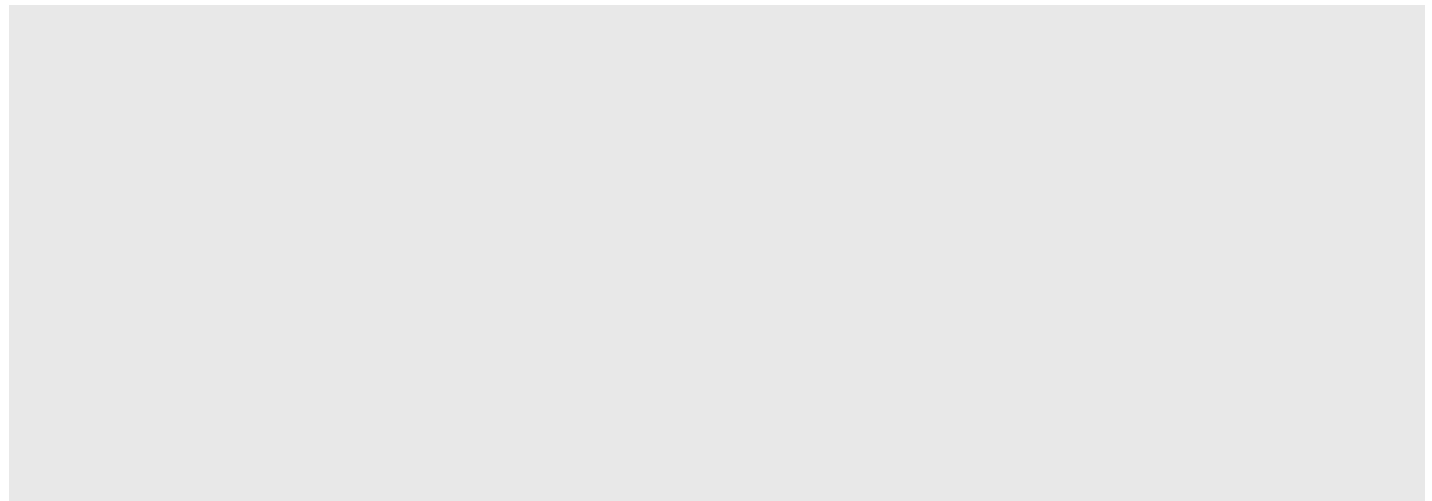
And yet it's inconceivable Baker believed the Hunter Biden emails were either fake or hacked. The New York Post had included a picture of the receipt signed by Hunter Biden, and an [FBI subpoena](#) showed that the agency had taken possession of the laptop in December 2019.



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Finally, by 10 a.m., Twitter executives had bought into a wild hack-and-dump story. "The suggestion from experts - which rings true - is there was a hack that happened separately, and they loaded the hacked materials on the laptop that magically appeared at a repair shop in Delaware," wrote Roth.

At 3:38 p.m. that same day, Oct. 14, Baker arranges a phone conversation with Matthew J. Perry in the Office of the General Counsel of the FBI.



The FBI's influence operation persuaded Twitter executives that the Hunter Biden laptop did not come from a whistleblower, even though it did.



One Twitter executive linked to a Hill article, based on a Washington Post article, from Oct. 15, which falsely suggested that Giuliani's leak of the laptop had something to do with Russia.

While the FBI hyped "hack and leak" operations it was itself engaged in "brief and leak" operations. There is strong evidence that FBI agents have repeatedly warned elected officials, including President Donald Trump, of foreign influence with the primary goal of leaking the information to the news media. This is a political dirty trick used to create the perception of criminality.

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For example, in 2020, the FBI [gave](#) a briefing to Sens. [Chuck Grassley](#), R-Iowa, and Ron Johnson, R-Wis., claiming evidence of "Russian interference" in their investigation of Hunter Biden. The briefing angered the senators, who suspected a rat. They believed the FBI did it to discredit their investigation.

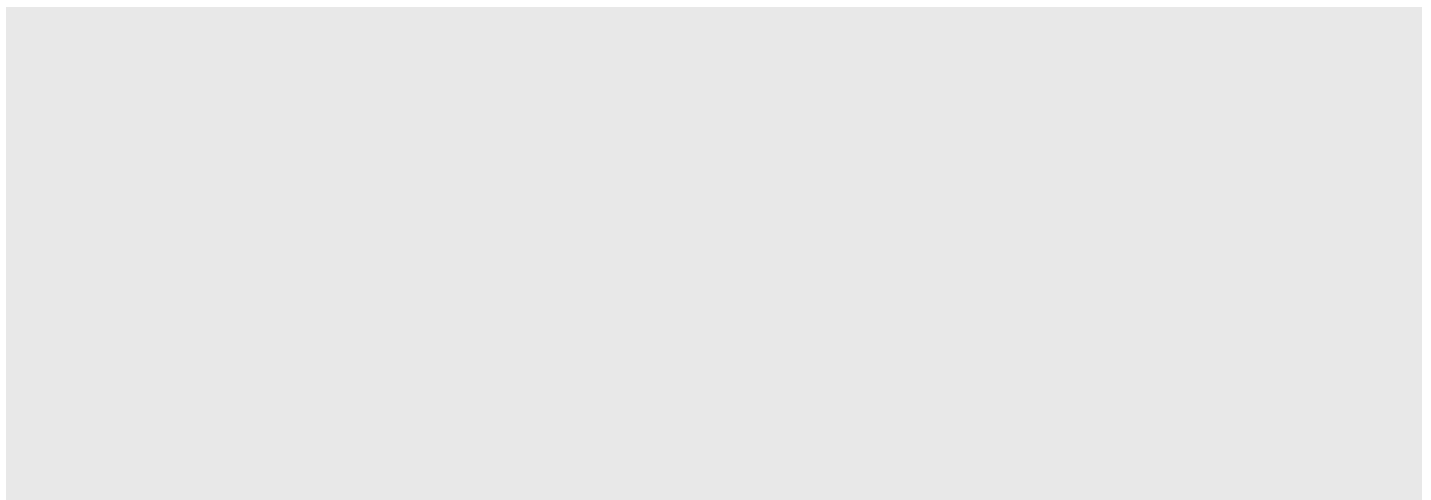
"The unnecessary FBI briefing provided the Democrats and liberal media the vehicle to spread their false narrative that our work advanced Russian disinformation," they wrote.



Notably, then-FBI General Counsel Jim Baker was himself investigated twice, in 2017 and 2019, for leaking information to the news media. "You're saying he's under criminal investigation?" asked a congressional investigator. "That's why you're not letting him answer?" To which Baker's attorney said, "Yes."

Ultimately, the FBI's influence campaign aimed at executives at news media, Twitter, and other social media companies worked: they censored and discredited the Hunter Biden laptop story. By December 2020, Baker and his colleagues even sent a note of thanks to the FBI for its work.

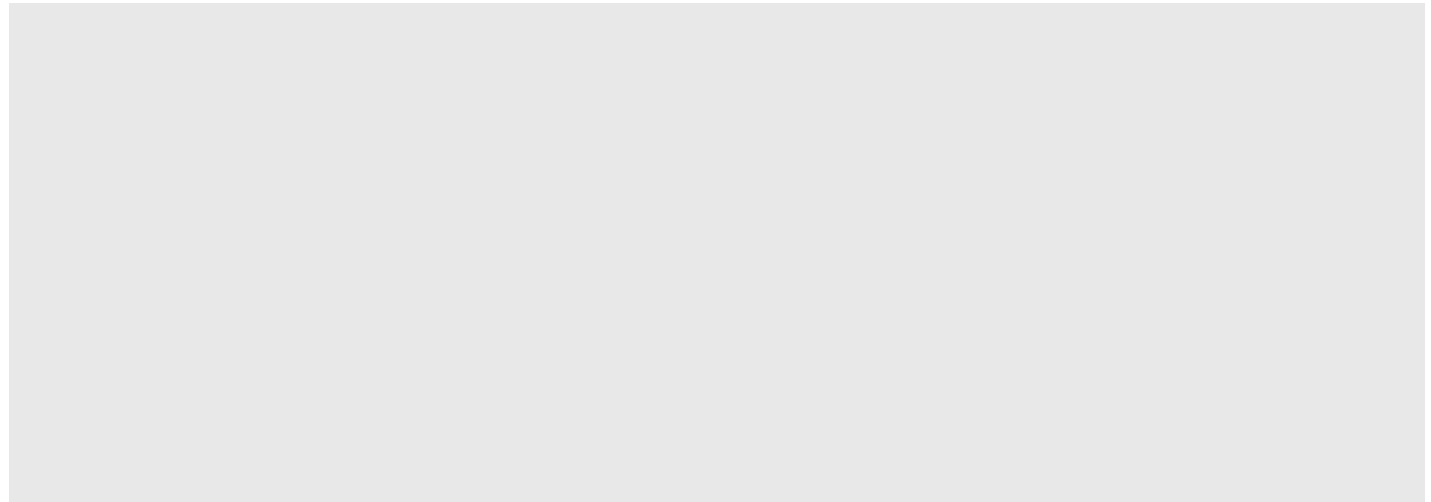
The FBI's influence campaign may have been helped by the fact that it was [paying Twitter millions of dollars](#) for its staff time. "I am happy to report we have collected \$3,415,323 since October 2019!" reports an associate of Jim Baker in early 2021.



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In response to the Twitter Files revelation of high-level FBI agents at Twitter, Rep. Jim Jordan, R-Ohio, said, "I have concerns about whether the government was running a misinformation operation on We the People."

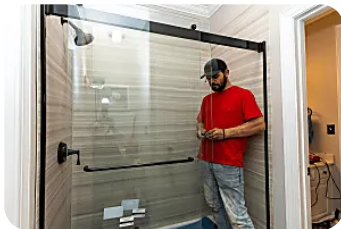
Anyone who reads the Twitter Files, regardless of their political orientation, should share those concerns.



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Michael Shellenberger is a best-selling and award-winning author and journalist and co-founder of [Public](#), a Substack publication

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